

frequently; although not listed by Lawton and other recent authors, this species was noted as a bracken herbivore by Tutt (1906. *Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation* **18**: 179-182). Finally, Lawton (1976. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* **73**: 187-216) lists *Laconobia oleracea* (L.) as a possible bracken herbivore, 'not confirmed by field sampling or more recent literature'. This species was the most frequently encountered species of Lepidoptera feeding on bracken at our study site.

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### ***Epiphyas postvittana* (Walker) (Lep.: Tortricidae) damaging apricot fruits in Tyne and Wear**

*Epiphyas postvittana* (Walker), also known as the Light Brown Apple Moth, is an Australian tortrix moth that became established in south west England in 1936. It has since spread widely and has been recorded as a pest of a wide range of ornamental plants. The larvae usually feed in shoot tips or between leaves bound together with silk. Despite its common name, this moth is not a significant pest of apples in Britain, unlike in its native Australia.

On 14 June 2004, I was sent a nearly ripe apricot fruit from a garden in Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear (O.S. grid reference NZ 338721). This had a single caterpillar feeding inside the fruit near the stone. The larva left the fruit and pupated a week later, with the adult moth emerging on 5 July 2004. The owner of the apricot reported that many of the fruits on the tree were affected and that a similar infestation had occurred the previous year. The apricot was being grown in a pot that is kept in a glasshouse during January to late June, after which it is placed out of doors. The fruit on a peach and nectarine in the same glasshouse had not been damaged.

I am grateful for Mr Kirby Haye for sending me the caterpillar-infested apricot from his garden.— A. J. HALSTEAD, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.

### **Female sex bias in captive bred Winter Moth *Operophtera brumata* (L.) (Lep: Geometridae)**

We report an unexpected finding relating to two separate batches of adult Winter Moths *Operophtera brumata* (L.) bred from larvae obtained in the spring of 2004 (five and seven specimens collected in Lancashire and Surrey, respectively) which